



CITY Annual Report



The Facilitating Backbone Team

Lessons Learned

When you're coordinating a multi-stakeholder, city-wide project, momentum is everything, even when financial resources are unavailable. Using a committee model, constantly looking ahead, and seeking interim funds for gap periods keep the process moving. At the same time, building CITY clusters at a neighbourhood level requires a significant investment of time and energy; the coordination of each cluster requires paid staff to devote the time required to build the CITY framework in their neighbourhoods.



Achievements

This year, CITY acquired funds from the LesLois Shaw Foundation in partnership with the Jane-Finch Neighbourhood Cluster and from Youth CI to execute the CITY project. With the Youth CI funding, we have hired youth and adult neighbourhood cluster staff to drive and support local priorities, as well as backbone staff to support shared measurement.

Congratulations to Angela Koh, our CITY Coordinator, and Talha Patel, our Youth Facilitator for the Youth Service Network Neighbourhood Cluster!

Common Agenda

Lessons Learned

While CITY's metric, increasing the graduation rates of racialized youth furthest away from opportunity, has yielded significant buy-in (we all agree—education is important!), we still need to provide a strong case for our theory of change based on research and evidence.

Achievements

CITY's Facilitating Backbone Youth Facilitators have done a spectacular job engaging youth groups from each Neighbourhood Cluster in the complex, and sometimes confusing, world of CITY. From creating videos on CITY's *integrated system of care*, to facilitating sessions about collective impact and CITY's common agenda, our Youth Facilitators have ensured that young people are prepared to participate in the growth and development of CITY. Backbone staff and academic partners have also been working to simplify the layers of our theory of change for easier consumption. They've gathered additional research, produced resources and orientation materials, and written rationales to explain our approach and why we are confident it will help address this complex issue.



Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Lessons Learned

CITY cannot thrive on CITY priorities alone: we have to align our priorities and goals with each cluster's existing priorities and goals. By supporting the work that is already happening or is of particular urgency in each neighbourhood, we build momentum, increase integration, and ultimately create a more cohesive drive to achieve our shared goals.

Achievements

This past year, CITY supported the Jane-Finch Cluster to demonstrate the impact of youth spaces in schools through the authorship of a research report and, with the support of the LesLois Shaw Foundation, the creation of a video on youth spaces. Access to safe and supportive youth spaces was a priority that resonated with all of the neighbourhood Clusters and it was particularly interesting for backbone staff to explore how they operate as an *integrated systems of care and support*.

We also spent time aligning CITY's theory of change with the Youth Services Network (YSN) recently-developed Strategic Plan. Youth engagement was identified as a top priority, and through CITY funding we have been able to hire a youth facilitator, Talha Patel, to develop and drive a youth engagement strategy for the neighborhood. At the same time, with recent violence in the neighbourhood, safety and crisis response have emerged as a local priority for YSN. We have partnered with a graduate student from University of Waterloo to conduct a research project with YSN to understand the context and identify an integrated safety protocol for the community. Residents, service providers and youth have been engaged.

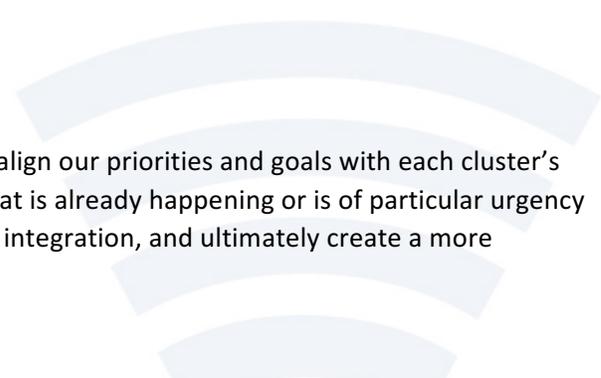
Continuous Communication

Lessons Learned

CITY is a large body with many important arms doing different work—we need to communicate more effectively with each of them. Effective communication is more than frequent communication; each time we engage a cluster, a partner, a member, we must do so with an articulated purpose and ensure everyone understands how it fits into the whole process.

Achievements

Over the year, CITY has engaged key players to sit on the City-Wide Cluster that works at the systems level, as well as other education-focused collective impact projects in Prince Edward County, Kingston, and St. James's Town. We've updated our website, developed orientation materials, and provided updates to Youth CI and LesLois Shaw Foundation on our progress. We have developed a communications plan...and are on our way to implementing it! We plan to bring all of our amazing partners and friends together in the new year.



Shared Measurement

Lessons Learned

Shared measurement is a tough notion to wrap one's head around, so sometimes we like to use the term shared learning to help highlight the benefits. We realized that the simplest approach was to start with what clusters are already doing and collecting, and build from there. It's a long and dynamic process that takes time and patience, but it's also the piece that has the most buy-in—we want to tell our stories, we want to demonstrate our impact, and we want to get better and better.



Achievements

Alongside Neighbourhood Clusters, we explored the Pathways to Education Community Mapping Tool to determine if it could be valuable to CITY—and decided it will be! We collected data from the Scarborough Executive Network's cluster and built a baseline data report that identifies what's being captured and what we need to work on. We are working with other Clusters to do the same.

With the Students Commission as the lead backbone organization, we're building off the tools and infrastructure that have already gone into developing a shared evaluation platform, SharingtheStories.ca. As the external evaluator for all of Trillium Foundation's Youth Opportunities Fund grantees, we've been able to learn a great deal about shared measures, evaluation planning, aggregate reports and the value of shared measurement in driving the important work that we do. We've also engaged academic partners to help us build a shared measurement framework for CITY, as well as hired a Shared Measurement backbone staff member.

Congratulations to Edil Kassim, the CITY/Sharing the Stories Evaluation Coordinator! We hope to begin implementing and adapting our shared measurement system with CITY partners in the new year.

